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ABSTRACT

In announcing the start of the work of New American Schools (NAS) in 1991, President George Bush offered the challenge of designing new schools for the year 2000 and beyond. In 2000, NAS remains committed to the mission of providing schools with the vision and tools they need to transform themselves based on exemplary models for comprehensive reform. The base of experience of the NAS programs demonstrates that comprehensive school reform models which integrate rigorous curriculum, high-quality professional development, meaningful parent and community involvement, and businesslike management principles can raise student achievement dramatically. Design teams from NAS offer professional development that is geared specifically to standards-rich content and the demands of comprehensive school improvement. NAS works with school districts to help schools find designs that fit their needs and circumstances. Because NAS provides valuable assistance to schools and school districts, states are increasingly asking their help in large-scale reform efforts. More than 2,100 schools across all 50 states are implementing NAS designs. Case studies of NAS efforts at the district level in Memphis, Tennessee, and at the state level in Maryland show how effective NAS work can be. An attachment contains "Design Team Snapshots." (SLD)

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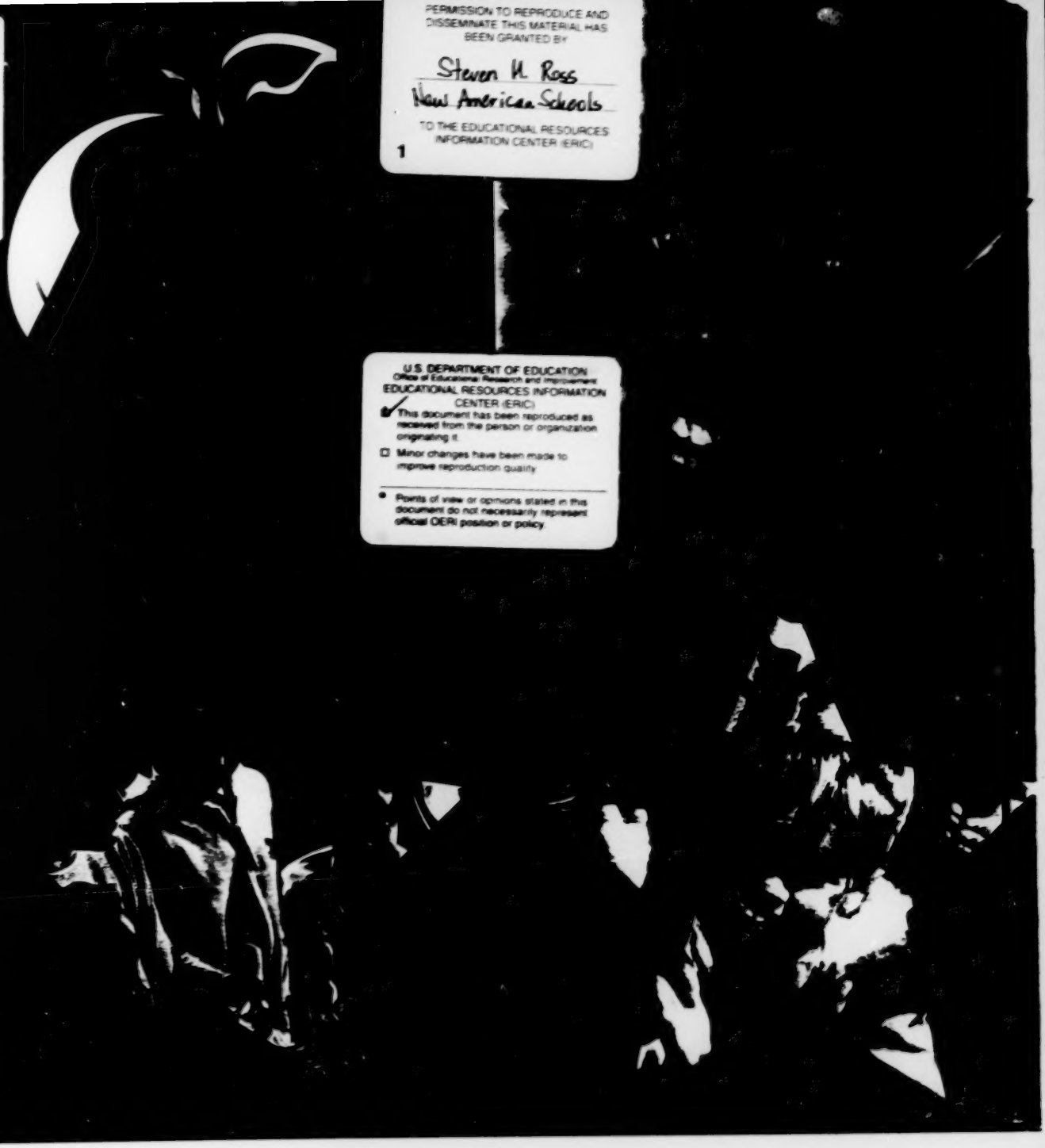

Stellar schools for a new century

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New American Schools

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2000 and Beyond 2

New American Schools Shine On 4

Putting It Together

On the School Level 16

On the District Level 18

On the State Level 20

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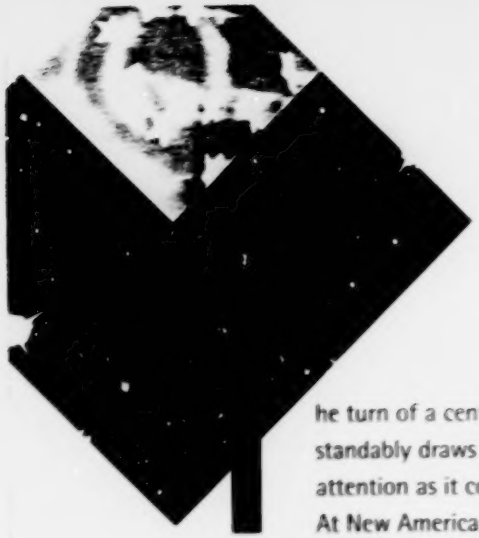
Every child a star

New American Schools



2000 and Beyond

The turn of a century understandably draws a great deal of attention as it comes and goes. At New American Schools (NAS), however, our eye was on the year 2000 all along. In announcing the start of our work in 1991, President George Bush offered us "a new challenge – to reinvent American education, to design new American schools for the year 2000 and beyond." We took this challenge seriously, creating innovative designs that have sparked a comprehensive school reform movement.

We remain as committed as ever to this original mission: to provide schools with the vision and the tools they need to transform themselves based on exemplary models for comprehensive reform. Our base of experience is deep enough now to demonstrate that comprehensive school reform models that integrate rigorous curriculum, high-quality professional development, meaningful parent and community involvement, and businesslike management principles can raise student achievement dramatically for many more students.

We know that no school needs to start from scratch in this work. Our growing group of Design Teams offers an unparalleled range of effective choices in addressing this fundamental goal of increasing academic knowledge and skills. While each takes a different approach to boosting school performance, all of the NAS designs exemplify the kinds of schools this nation needs in the 21st century. Schools that fully implement a design are driven by high academic standards for all students, steeped in research about best educational practices, and focused on results.

As the new century begins, more than 2,100 schools have begun to implement a NAS design. We are proud of the strides we and our partners have made in less than a decade, but also are aware that we have a considerable way to go.

The history of education reform has shown us that even the best plans rarely are followed long enough to make lasting change. For this reason, NAS has worked increasingly to support schools – with school districts, states, the federal government, and the philanthropic community – and to find ways of sustaining what has evolved into a national comprehensive school reform movement. New American Schools offers schools, districts, and states practical assistance in guiding schools through the crucial step of selecting designs and in realigning policies and practices in key areas such as professional development and resource allocation to support and sustain school change.

NAS also has taken the pioneering step of creating an Investment Fund to help providers of comprehensive school reform models build their capacity to serve schools. Our Fund works for design-based organizations very much like venture capitalists in Silicon Valley work with startup technology firms. NAS offers financial resources, expertise, and networks of contacts to help the providers grow smartly and efficiently.

The capacity of our Design Teams and other high-quality comprehensive reform

models to work with the burgeoning list of schools desiring their help is a critical concern. To serve the new demand for external assistance providers, literally hundreds of new models have sprung up with no record by which schools can judge them. To help educators make the vital choice of a school design to meet their needs and fit their conditions, New American Schools has produced a draft set of standards and performance indicators that we hope will help practitioners and policymakers arrive at wise choices. We currently are gathering a broad range of input to gain national consensus and acceptance. The standards will be the checklist that every school and school district should have to ensure they are choosing the right model. Together, these standards and the Investment Fund provide a strong foundation for the growing comprehensive school reform movement.

In many ways, the stars of education reform are beginning to align in a way that holds unprecedented promise. The sentiment of the American public has never been as supportive of improving our students' performance. Never before have we had the variety of effective models to improve student achievement or the growing ability to help schools implement those models. With many states and the federal government offering significant financial support to aid schools seeking to transform themselves, the national climate clearly favors the work New American Schools began in 1991.

Now is the time to reaffirm our commitment to two important premises – that we cannot afford to leave a single student behind without a quality education and that, to this end, a few good schools will never be enough. To make these ideas real in daily life, schools, school districts, and states all have important roles to play, and we, as a nation, must build our capacity to help them in their endeavors.

John D. Ong
Chairman

John L. Anderson
Vice Chairman

Donald M. Feuerstein
President

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New American Schools Shine On

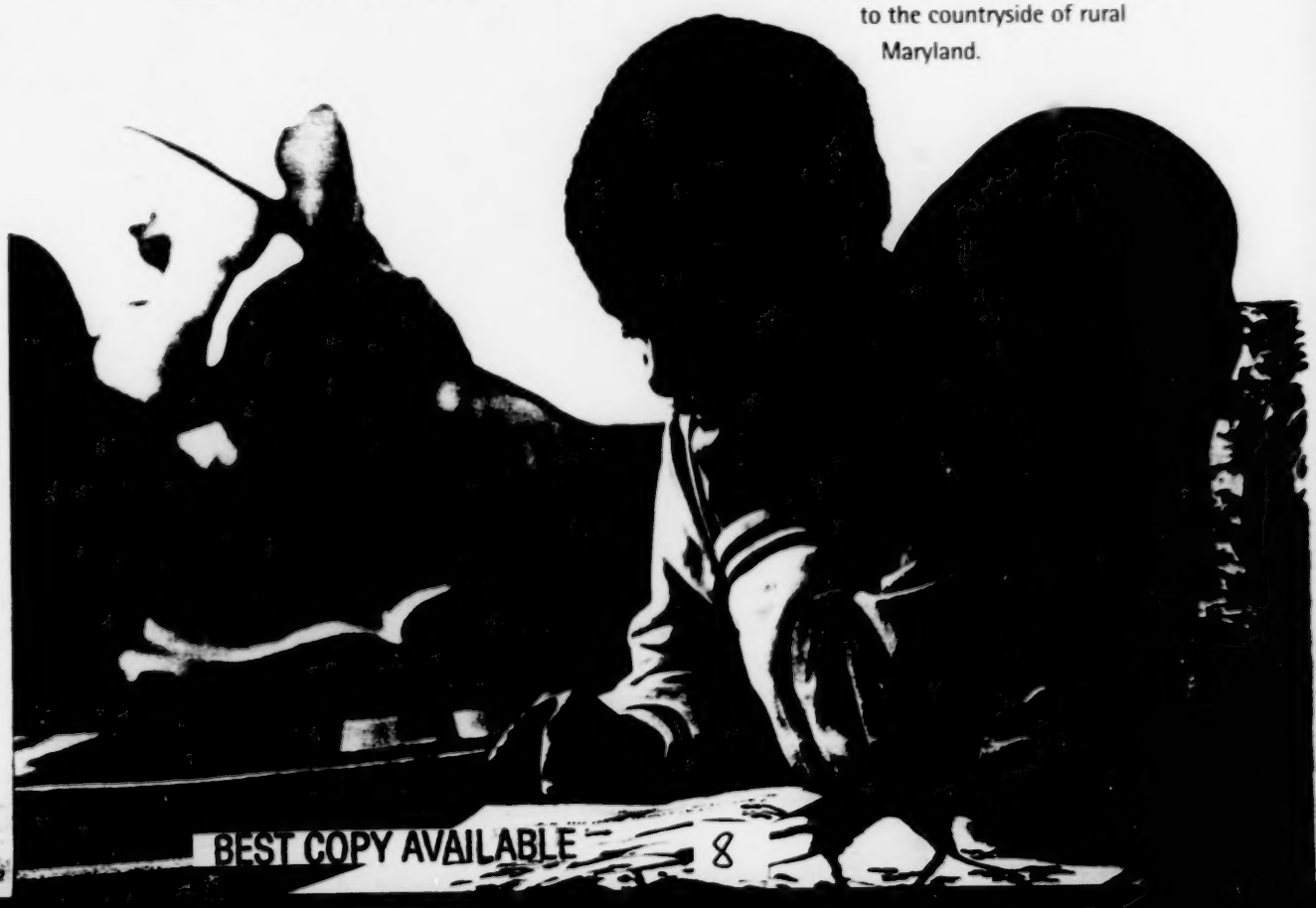
To the untrained observer, the night sky can be nothing more than a confusing jumble. It may be possible to pick out a bright spot here or there. But with the right set of knowledge and skills, an astronomer can connect the dots of stars to lay out the constellations that paint the celestial tableau. One star shining brightly but alone is not enough to see Orion or Capricorn.

New American Schools is working to make stellar achievement a down-to-earth reality for many more students in many more schools. We have seen how students can soar beyond the pull of low expectations to reach rigorous academic standards. But we have found that education reform must be comprehensive to be lasting and effective. In that way, reform is like the constellations our ancestors drew. One shining school does not create the picture we all want to see; one shining school is not enough to ensure every child gets a quality education. To see the constellation of sustainable and successful school reform, we must trace lines from shining school districts to shining states to a nation of stars. We cannot afford for any point of the constellation to stay dark. New American Schools is providing targeted and tested support and tools at each of these points in the education system to help our schools shine.

Helping Schools to Shine

New American Schools (NAS) began with a common-sense proposition: Our nation cannot expect better performance from students without changes in the ways schools operate and the ways teachers practice in their classrooms. Through a competitive process, we identified the best ideas from a number of America's most renowned educational experts. We spent several years helping them create strong models and field-testing them in hundreds of schools. Since that initial research and development, we have helped our Design Teams continue to strengthen their capacity to work with more and more schools each year.

This work has yielded comprehensive school reform designs that are blueprints for change. Their origins trace back clearly to a solid body of research on what makes schools and teachers effective. They are comprehensive because they address all students, all subjects, all grades, and all the resources a school can bring to bear to raise achievement – whether human, financial, curricular, or technological. They all are grounded in high standards. The NAS designs have proven to be replicable in schools committed to the difficult task of transforming themselves – from the suburbs of Seattle to the streets of Memphis to the countryside of rural Maryland.



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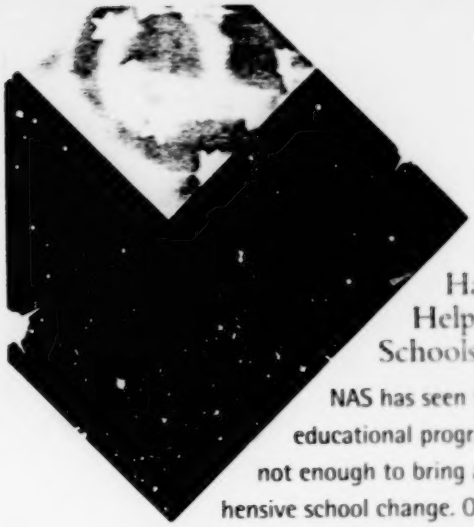


Practical, Hands-On Help That Schools Need

NAS has seen that a good educational program in itself is not enough to bring about comprehensive school change. Our designs often have been described as "breaking the mold" – that would be tough work for a school to attempt alone. So the developers of the NAS models, our Design Teams, offer schools hands-on, practical support through professional development, tools, and instructional materials. NAS calls this approach "design-based assistance."

Education reformers have long talked about restructuring schools. Through design-based assistance, NAS goes a step further, providing schools with concrete visions for change and the assistance needed to make those visions a reality.

This kind of help is what schools must have to become high-performance organizations, a recent survey conducted by the U.S. Department of Education indicates. Only four out of 10 teachers in the survey said they felt "very well prepared" to implement new teaching methods or state and district academic standards. However, traditional methods of helping teachers improve their practice apparently have little effect. Less than half of teachers said professional development in the previous year had improved their teaching "a lot" in these two key areas – even when they had had eight or more hours of it.

Through design-based assistance, the Design Teams offer professional development that makes a difference – geared specifically to standards-rich content and the demands of comprehensive school improvement. In interviews conducted by the Boston-based Parthenon Group, principals in schools implementing our designs rated professional development as the most valuable aspect of their schools' work with a Design Team. And the principals' rating was higher than that given by principals in schools using comprehensive school reform models not developed by NAS. In addition, principals in NAS schools praised the nationwide networks that have been formed among reform-minded educators who are working with Design Teams.

Perhaps most importantly, the principals using NAS designs were more satisfied with the student achievement gains they saw than were other principals, even though the NAS principals expressed more demanding views

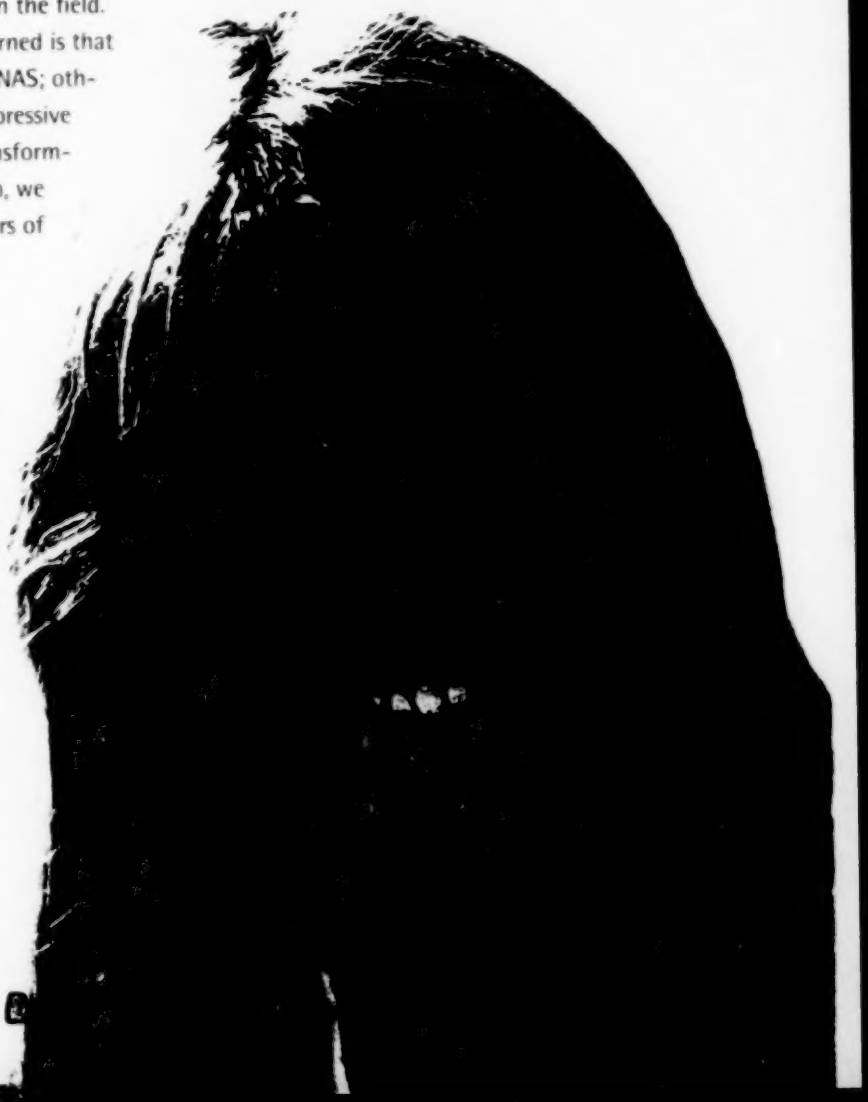
"... principals rated professional development as the most valuable aspect of their schools' work with a Design Team."

about how quickly that improvement should come. (To learn more about the NAS Design Teams, see the insert at the back of this publication, or visit our Web site at www.naschools.org.)

Helping Design Teams to Shine

From the outset, New American Schools has been as committed to learning as an organization as we have been to improving learning in the classroom. In fact, the two have gone hand in hand as NAS has gained substantial experience through our work in the field. Among the things we have learned is that effectiveness is not limited to NAS; others have developed equally impressive comprehensive models for transforming schools. As an organization, we are asking several new providers of high-quality comprehensive school reform services to join New American Schools.

In each case, the design teams joining the NAS "family" will meet the stringent set of standards of quality for effective design-based assistance providers that we have developed based on our own experience and the views of practitioners and experts. The same, of course, is true of the Design Teams that have been a part of NAS since the start. We are reaching out beyond our initial group of Design Teams because we believe strongly that a diversity of effective comprehensive school reform models is a prerequisite for the success of this national movement. It's abundantly clear that one size does not fit all when it comes to designs for transforming schools. This is the real choice we need in public education — a selection of models that are research based and replicable and that strengthen and align everything from lesson plans to parental involvement in the name of higher student achievement.



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Design Teams can offer that selection of distinctive, effective approaches only if they have the capacity to provide assistance on the ground to schools that seek their help. NAS has focused on supporting Design Teams so that they can provide effective assistance to schools. We are encouraged by the recent American Institutes of Research "consumer guide" to comprehensive school reform models, which gave five of the NAS designs its top rating for the support they provide schools; the other two designs received the second-highest rating on the five-point scale.

The issue of the capacity to serve has grown even more critical since the creation of the federal Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program, which drew on the work of our Design Teams and opened the door to design-based assistance for thousands more schools through competitive grants. In short order, this federal program created a national market for comprehensive reform as states submitted their plans for distributing the funds. NAS estimates that spending on school reform services now totals $460 million a year and is growing by as much as 50 percent annually.

Venture Capital to Expand Comprehensive School Reform

To ensure that schools continue to have real choice, New American Schools has created an Investment Fund to support the growth and long-term viability of providers of comprehensive school reform. NAS determined several years ago that Design Teams could be sustained only as fee-for-service entities; the traditional grant sources for research are not accessible in sufficient supply or duration to bring reforms to scale. A second and perhaps equally important reason for fee-for-service is the value placed on services that are purchased rather than received for free; this ensures the school and community commitment necessary to implement comprehensive school reform. The revolving Fund allows NAS to act as a venture capital firm would act in helping a new and growing company. Not only do we provide financial investment, but we also supply expertise in how to grow an education reform business, knowledge of the education market, contacts with other businesses and educators, and the legitimacy of a brand name.

The Investment Fund represents an important step forward in sustaining comprehensive school reform in the future. It fills a gap between the grant support for educational research, development, and innovation traditionally provided by philanthropies and access to sources of private-sector financing available to well established nonprofits. More importantly, the Fund provides a means to finance school reform on a much larger scale.

The Fund assists current and future Design Teams that meet the NAS standards for design-based assistance (see page 11). It offers qualified providers of design-based assistance with lines of credit to build implementation

capacity, term loans for the business infrastructure necessary for growth, and joint ventures for startup designs or new product lines within existing designs.

The Fund will be self-sustaining, applying the income generated by its investments to meet operating costs. Our immediate goal is to raise $25 million for the Fund from both private and public sources. At the beginning of 2000, more than $15 million was available, including $4 million from the U.S. Department of Education and a $10 million loan from the Prudential Insurance Company. NAS will continue to expand the Fund, enabling us to assist a growing number of high-quality providers of design-based assistance.

Through the Fund, NAS already has helped four Design Teams establish independent organizations to carry out their work, separating them from the research institutions that fostered their early growth.

Helping School Districts to Shine

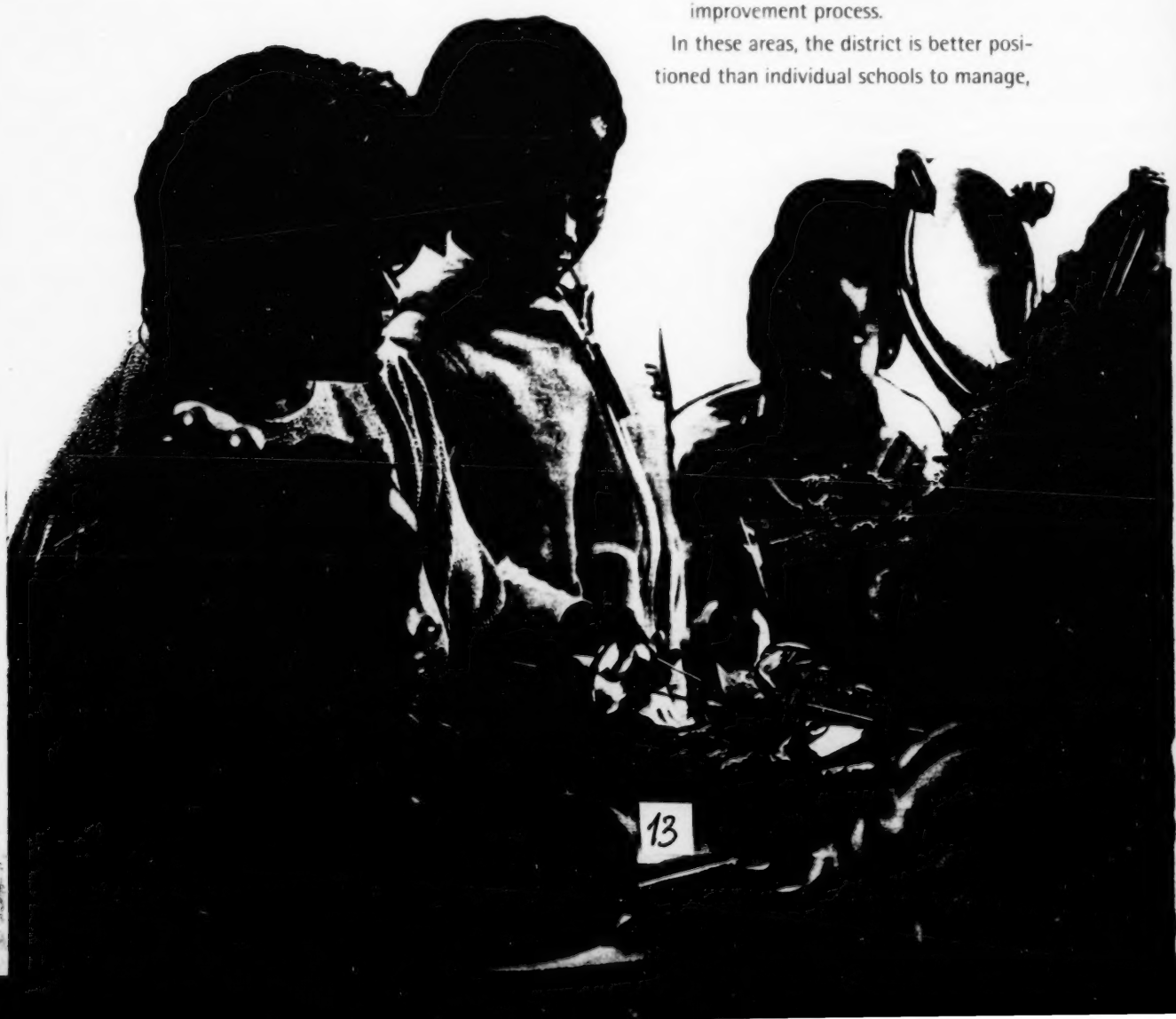
New American Schools brings nearly a decade of experience to the work of school improvement. We have spent the last five years "scaling up" – moving the Design Teams from successful research and development in a small number of schools to widespread national use. Along the way, we have discovered that schools in the midst of this kind of transformation cannot thrive in isolation. First, the work is difficult, and it requires the kinds of support that schools may be hard pressed to build by themselves. Second, improving one school does not constitute our real goal – dramatic improvement in achievement for large numbers of students. This vision of the students we serve is as comprehensive as the designs with which we help their schools improve.

Increasingly, we have worked with school districts to build their infrastructure to start

and sustain comprehensive school improvement. We help districts create the supportive environment in which schools using comprehensive designs can flourish. Based on our experience with partner districts and states and extensive research by the RAND Corporation throughout our scaleup effort, NAS has identified five critical areas of activity that are carried out best by districts. They are:

- Leading and managing a focused, comprehensive, and coordinated plan for improvement at all levels;
- Identifying and reallocating resources to support the implementation of comprehensive school improvement strategies;
- Enhancing and aligning professional development systems to help build teacher capacity through design-based assistance and comprehensive school reform;
- Developing a process for summative and formative evaluation of school improvement strategies; and
- Engaging parents and the community to build broad-based support and long-term commitment to a continuous improvement process.

In these areas, the district is better positioned than individual schools to manage,



monitor, and maintain a comprehensive, systemic school improvement effort, using resources from the district office and from partners such as Design Teams.

When New American Schools begins a partnership with a school district, a NAS staff liaison works with local leadership to conduct a thorough assessment of needs and establish goals in the five critical areas of support to schools. NAS has created our own diagnostic tools to accelerate the process and ensure its quality. The next step is the development of a comprehensive school reform plan that strives to re-examine and realign the district's apparatus to better bolster efforts by schools to use research-based models.

NAS offers case studies that detail similar work in other districts, which help new partners to speed up their own improvement. We also have assembled a team of leading experts to serve as consultants to school districts that are working to address these five areas. The shape this assistance takes varies, depending on the needs of the district. In Topeka, Kan., NAS led principals in a two-day, back-to-school seminar, introducing them to comprehensive school reform as a way to solidify leadership for continuous improvement. In Memphis, Tenn., and Dorchester County, Md., NAS helped develop standards for professional development that challenge schools to look beyond the traditional pullout training sessions.

Our aim in our district work is to build knowledge and skills within partner jurisdictions so that they can carry on independently when the initial period of consultation ends.

"... virtually every school can find a NAS design that fits its needs and circumstances."

Setting Standards in a Rapidly Growing Market

The growing portfolio of Design Teams and the NAS Investment Fund's impact on providers' capacity to serve schools benefit both districts and schools (see pages 7 and 8). By working with NAS, districts can have confidence that the Design Teams represent the highest-quality service to schools and know that their diversity of approaches means that virtually every school can find a NAS design that fits its needs and circumstances. NAS has developed standards to serve as a guide for consumers in examining design-based assistance models.

To be sure, the number of comprehensive school reform models has risen dramatically since the federal government announced it would provide competitive grants to schools seeking to transform themselves. In the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program's first year, 83 percent of the grants went to schools that selected from 35 designs. The other 17 percent of awards went to

schools planning to implement one of about 200 other models. However, at a U.S. Department of Education conference this summer, a researcher from the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory said that many programs have been unjustified in tagging themselves as comprehensive and that only some models have demonstrated effectiveness.

To address the quality of design-based assistance, New American Schools has drafted a set of standards for comprehensive school reform providers based on our nine years of experience. To gain additional input and national consensus, this process involved reviews by the NAS staff, Design Team leaders, partner school districts, RAND, the U.S. Department of Education, and a number of consultants and experts. In addition, we've embarked on a nine-month process to gather input and gain consensus from practitioners, policymakers, and community leaders in districts across the country.

To be a part of NAS, a Design Team must meet these standards. We believe design-based assistance standards are necessary for the entire industry to provide consumers with a way to measure quality and confidence in the providers. For that reason, we've engaged experts in helping to build national consensus through an independent blue ribbon panel consisting of leaders from the education, business, and political arenas (see insert).

Appropriately, the standards begin with the academic content of the design, demanding that it be truly comprehensive, linked to research and best practices, and aimed at helping all students reach high standards. The standards go much further, though. They define the effective delivery of services to client schools, the strategy required to implement a design, and the necessary business and management practices.

NAS also has included a set of performance indicators that elaborate on each standard. For example, to meet the standard for providing professional development and technical assistance, a Design Team should provide at least 10 days of professional development in its first year at a school and seven days in subsequent years, regular time for teachers to collaborate on design implementation, and a program for developing school leadership.

Helping States to Shine

Because New American Schools can provide valuable assistance to both school districts and individual schools, states increasingly have sought us out to advise and support their large-scale efforts to advance comprehensive school reform as a strategy for raising student achievement. As a result, a noteworthy share of the recent growth in NAS efforts at both the school and district levels has come from special initiatives begun by states. This new push by states fits well with a fundamental belief at NAS – a few good schools are not enough – and meshes with the states' own desires to strengthen accountability for results.

States such as Illinois, Kansas, and New Jersey have sought partnerships with New American Schools to provide technical assistance and support to a set of school districts that have committed to introducing comprehensive school reform models to a significant percentage of their campuses. These partnerships allow NAS to offer the designated districts an array of services – from help with the matching process between schools and designs to more sophisticated consultation on professional development, resource reallocation, and management issues (see page 10).

NAS also has helped a number of states – including California, Delaware, Illinois, Kansas, Maryland, Missouri, Mississippi, New Jersey, Tennessee, Texas, and Wisconsin – introduce the idea of comprehensive school reform to schools and disseminate information about specific designs and the process by which schools can select a design knowledgeably and effectively.

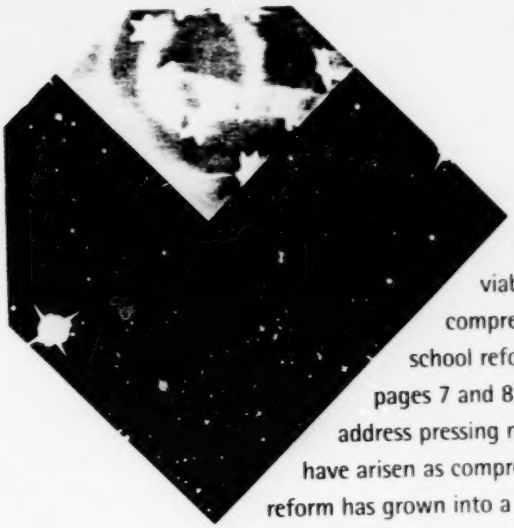
New Level of State Commitment

More and more, states are acknowledging the powerful combination embodied by the NAS and other comprehensive school reform Design Teams – a proven blueprint for change and the right kind of assistance to make change a reality in many schools.

Helping the Nation to Shine

More than 2,100 schools across all 50 states are implementing NAS designs. One of every three dollars being awarded through the federal Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program has been going to a NAS design. We take this position of prominence seriously and have undertaken a number of initiatives to support and promote the comprehensive school reform movement.

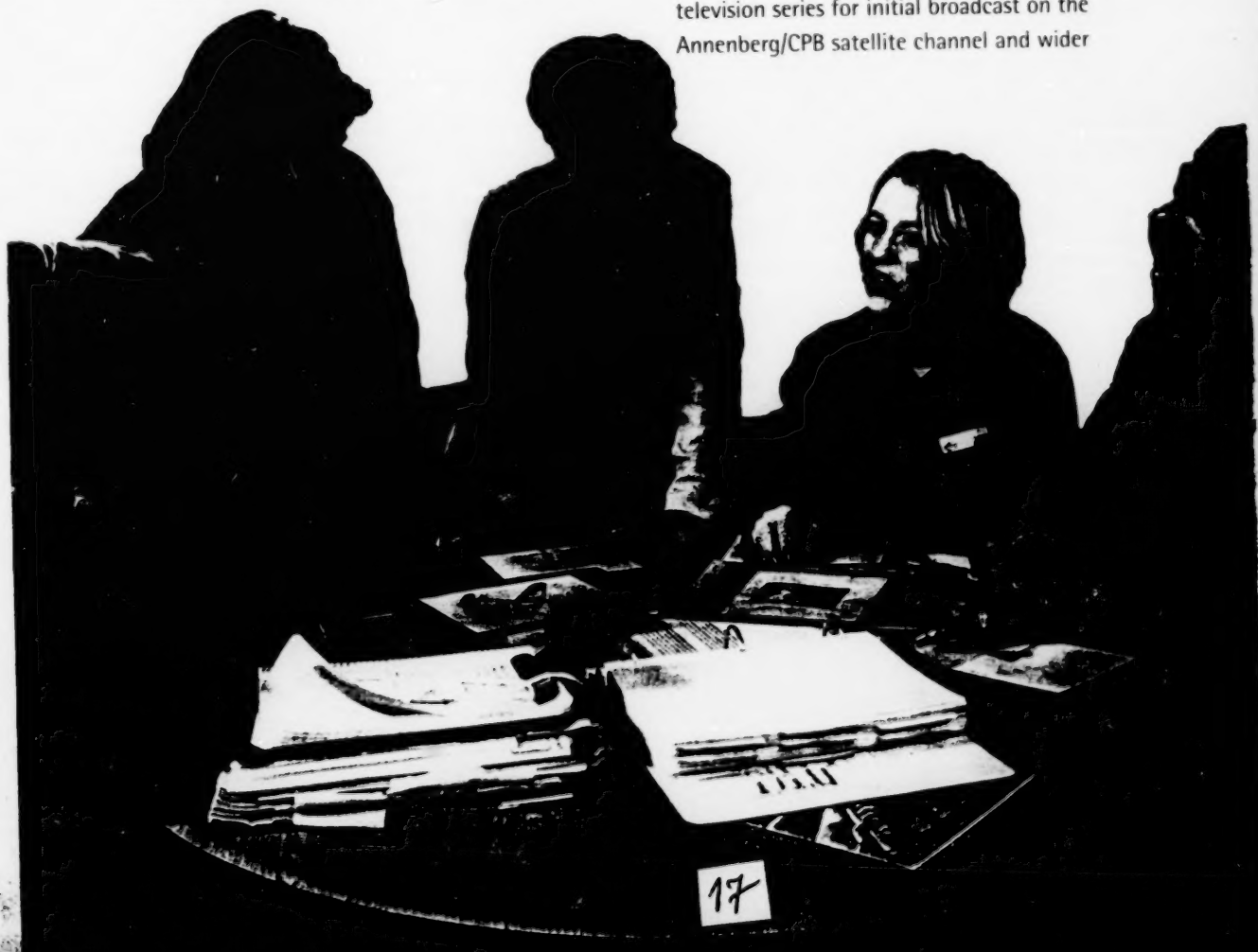
First and foremost, NAS' efforts to create an Investment Fund and a set of quality standards for design-based assistance are leading examples of the steps needed to maintain the



long-range viability of comprehensive school reform (see pages 7 and 8). Both address pressing needs that have arisen as comprehensive reform has grown into a widespread movement, and both are helping to establish a national infrastructure for change by defining comprehensive school reform and providing the resources to make it happen.

Like the quality of providers and their capacity to provide assistance, access to solid information is important to the implementation of comprehensive school reform. NAS has taken several steps to make our research and experience more widely available. The NAS Web site (www.naschools.org) has been enhanced to include the most pertinent information on a state-by-state basis regarding implementation of the federal comprehensive school reform program. Links to other key sites also are included. The NAS Web site amounts to a library on comprehensive school reform that affords parents, educators, and policymakers one-stop access to the information they need to understand comprehensive reform.

In partnership with the Annenberg/Corporation for Public Broadcasting Math and Science Project, NAS has produced a nine-part television series for initial broadcast on the Annenberg/CPB satellite channel and wider



distribution via videotapes. Seven of the segments take viewers inside schools that are implementing the original NAS designs. Teachers, principals, students, and parents tell the story of the Design Teams' impact on their schools. The first segment in the series examines comprehensive school reform as a growing national movement. The final segment describes the "New American School District," the vision of district-level change to support comprehensive school reform at scale.

As New American Schools helps schools, Design Teams, school districts, and states to shine, the sum of these parts becomes greater than the whole. Like the stars that guided seafarers, the work we do comes together to form a steady course and a coherent picture. It is not a representation of some mythical figure, but rather what every parent, every citizen wants to see for every student – knowledge, skills, and learning that will allow them to reach whatever star they choose.

A Brief History of NAS

In 1991, a committed group of corporate leaders answered President Bush's challenge to harness the nation's special genius for invention to create the next generation of American schools by forming New American Schools (NAS). The organization tapped into the national imagination with a competition to create "break-the-mold" schools. NAS received 686 proposals from dynamic coalitions of the nation's best educators, businesspeople, and researchers. Through an expert review panel, which involved our third-party evaluator, the RAND Corporation, the list was narrowed to 11 reform models. NAS began to refer to each of these models as a **"design"** for schools – a plan for reorganizing an entire school around a common vision of higher student achievement, replacing the traditional approach of piecemeal programs.

The Clinton administration endorsed the work of New American Schools in 1993; with U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley's support, the U.S. Department of Education began to work with NAS and the research-based designs.

After years of research, development, and field-testing, in 1995, NAS began a sustained effort to "scale up" – introducing the designs into more and more schools across the country. Our experience showed that school designs could not be successful simply as written plans; rather, educators needed help to implement a design. NAS has come to refer to this combination of a design and hands-on assistance to schools as **"design-based assistance."**

In 1997, congressional leaders took notice of the student achievement and other positive results the NAS designs and a few other models were demonstrating. Based on these examples, Congress created a national demonstration program giving thousands of schools the opportunity to use comprehensive designs. Building on one of the original requirements NAS established for designs – that they help students achieve world-class standards in all of the core academic subjects – Congress called for the transformation of entire schools based on research-based, effective designs; they named this movement **"comprehensive school reform."**

New American Schools is committed to continued leadership of the comprehensive school reform movement through such initiatives as the establishment of the NAS Investment Fund, standards of quality for design-based assistance, and an aligned system of support for school districts committed to implementing comprehensive school reform at scale.

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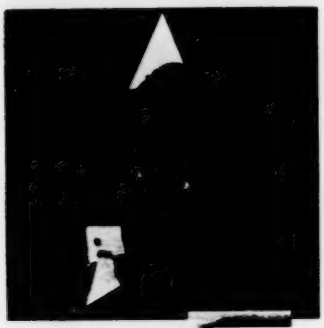


Putting It Together
on the School Level

From the sidewalk, Alton Elementary School in Memphis doesn't look very revolutionary. It's a squat, red brick structure from the 1960s adorned by scraggly shrubs.

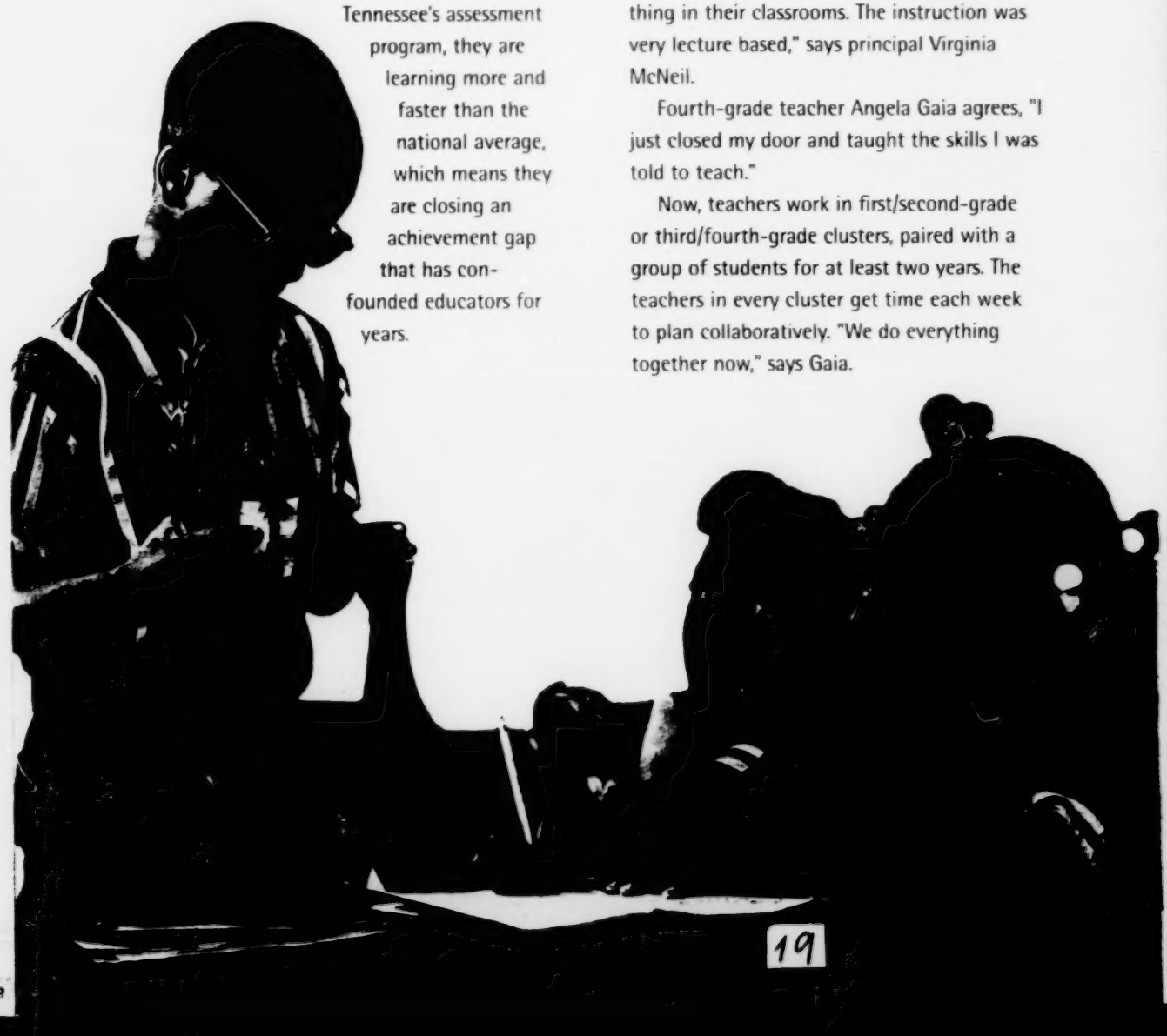
But inside the building, Alton's students – largely disadvantaged and minority – are succeeding in revolutionary ways. According to Tennessee's assessment program, they are learning more and faster than the national average, which means they are closing an achievement gap that has confounded educators for years.

The improvement has come quickly as the school has worked with a New American Schools Design Team (Co-nect). Implementing a comprehensive school reform model has improved how the school and its teachers work and how its children learn.

"We were a very traditional K-4 school. People were basically working on their own thing in their classrooms. The instruction was very lecture based," says principal Virginia McNeil.

Fourth-grade teacher Angela Gaia agrees, "I just closed my door and taught the skills I was told to teach."

Now, teachers work in first/second-grade or third/fourth-grade clusters, paired with a group of students for at least two years. The teachers in every cluster get time each week to plan collaboratively. "We do everything together now," says Gaia.



"Implementing a comprehensive school reform model has improved how the school and its teachers work and how its children learn."

Whitney Campbell, a second-grade teacher, says the reorganization has boosted the collegiality among Alton's faculty. "You know the people better," she says.

Teachers say the clusters allow them to specialize, not only in the classroom but also in the professional development they pursue. "Before I was responsible for all of it – everything that kids had to get," explains Gaia. That's not to say Alton's teachers do less training. The faculty of 36 recorded 3,000 collective hours of professional development on the NAS design, technology integration, and lesson-unit creation last year.

The design has made school life different for Alton's students as well. Instruction is project based, and students have a hand in shaping the projects they pursue.

"We have seminar time now every day" for addressing skills, says third-grade teacher Opanell Rhodes. "We also have project time – I call it 'make and take time.'" The project-based approach has pushed the school toward more authentic, performance-based assessment of student achievement.

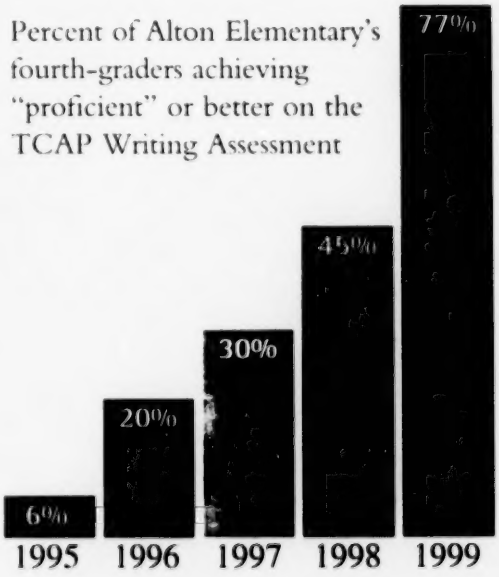
The projects also create more chances for students to learn together. "The kids work more now in cooperative groups," Gaia says. "And it's not just four kids with their chairs pushed together."

The changes clearly have given a significant boost to student achievement. In 1995, only 6 percent of Alton's fourth-graders were proficient writers based on Tennessee's state assessment. By 1999, 77 percent were. "They do a lot of things now, so they are not searching for words anymore. They know more words because they use them," McNeil explains.

In the state's "value-added" assessment system, Alton's three-year averages for reading and science both show that the school's children are recording greater gains in achievement than the national average.

For a school committed to improvement, the choice among NAS designs allowed that work to progress more quickly, McNeil says. "We made sure to pick a model that was researched and proven rather than having to do that research ourselves and reinvent something."

Percent of Alton Elementary's fourth-graders achieving "proficient" or better on the TCAP Writing Assessment



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Putting It Together
on the District Level

Gerry House, superintendent of the Memphis City Schools, sat back at a recent meeting and listened to principals talk about their schools. They weren't describing the old laundry lists of discrete projects or activities. They were talking about elements of comprehensive school reform models that were reshaping their schools, from lesson planning to professional development.

"It said to me that they understood it, that they are instructionally knowledgeable, focused principals," she recalls.

The principals' comments are only one sign of the changes that have come since the school district began asking schools to implement comprehensive designs (as of last year, every school had). At least as powerful an indicator are the improving test results at schools like Alton Elementary (see page 17).

"Memphis developed new standards for professional development that have redefined its efforts to improve teachers' practice."

Along the way, the district's central office has had to evolve its way of doing business to keep pace with the transformation going on in schools. As a partner jurisdiction with New American Schools, Memphis has benefited from the organization's expertise. But the district's experience also has informed NAS' view of the district-level support needed by schools undergoing comprehensive reform.

"We were learning together," House says. "We didn't really know what we had to change," says Dale Kalkofen, former associate superintendent for school reform. "We had to learn to put the whole foundation in place and work together to support the work in the schools."

NAS was "able to bring us the best thinkers on system-level reform," she says. House agrees, "We didn't have to go around scouting for the right experts."

Working with a NAS consultant, Memphis developed new standards for professional development that have redefined its efforts to improve teachers' practice. Educators now see everything from collaborative planning to the development of scoring rubrics to traditional training as professional development. The standards also have helped focus schools on design-based improvement.

"Through those standards, we've been able to pull together a lot of programs," Kalkofen says. "People in the buildings would tell you that it doesn't seem like we're doing 10 things at a time anymore."

Professional development now is seen as "an ongoing part of the work of the school," she says.

Memphis also has re-examined its financial resources to promote comprehensive reform, again drawing upon the NAS network of experts. This year, for the first time, the school system will award incentive rewards of up to $30,000 to schools that meet high performance targets. It also has given schools more authority over their own budgets.

"Their budgets now are spending plans to support their school improvement plans," Kalkofen says.

House traces the districtwide transformation back to a careful analysis of data and a set of goals adopted by the school board before Memphis partnered with NAS. The district and schools gravitated toward comprehensive school reform because it provided a coherent, well-organized process to get them to those expectations.

"They weren't selecting a design just to hang out a shingle," House explains. "They were selecting a design because it was a process they saw could help them reach the goals we had set."

Putting It Together
on the State Level

Comprehensive school reform is helping the state of Maryland move in the direction in which it has aimed – toward higher student achievement and fewer low-performing schools.

"How can we possibly know we're on the right path if we have no map to measure our progress and no compass to gauge our direction?" Maryland State Superintendent Nancy S. Grasmick asked the audience at a recent U.S. Department of Education conference. "This is precisely what an integrated, comprehensive school reform program provides."

The state introduced a sophisticated assessment for gauging state, district, and school performance in 1993. Its Maryland School Performance Assessment Program allows the state to provide schools with student achievement data and identify low-performing schools. Both features support Maryland's comprehensive school reform activities.

The availability of data allows schools and districts to undertake improvement planning to facilitate the adoption of comprehensive reform designs. For example, the Maryland Challenge Schools Initiative provides additional state funding to support the implementation of research-based designs. Each participating school must demonstrate a match between student and school needs, their selected design, and complementary practices. Currently, nine Challenge schools are implementing research-based designs; at the end of the 1999–2000 school year, 43 of the 56 Challenge schools will be poised to implement comprehensive school improvement efforts.

"By 2003, Maryland's strategic plan calls for all low-performing schools to select and use a research-based design."

Maryland has been a leader among states in efforts to measure and raise school performance and in comprehensive school reform. It is one of two states that partnered with New American Schools in 1995, along with eight school districts across the nation.

By 1999, 85 Maryland schools were implementing New American Schools designs, and another 133 schools were using effective, research-based practices from other providers. By 2003, the state's strategic plan calls for all low-performing schools to select and use a research-based design.

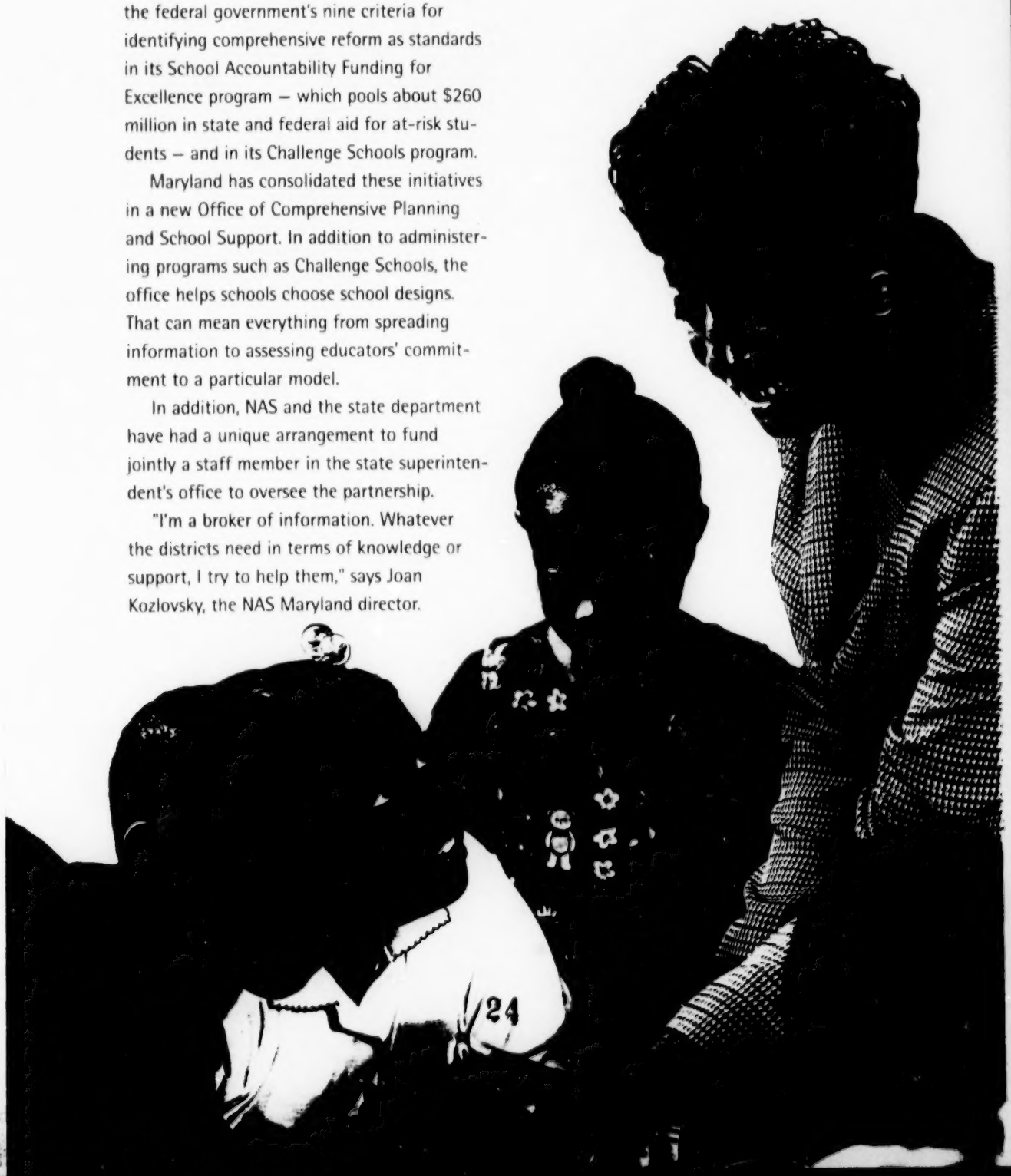
Maryland has shown flexibility and innovation when it comes to funding comprehensive school reform. The state was among the first to apply for federal Comprehensive School

Reform Demonstration Program funds, receiving $2.1 million in 1998. Maryland also uses the federal government's nine criteria for identifying comprehensive reform as standards in its School Accountability Funding for Excellence program – which pools about $260 million in state and federal aid for at-risk students – and in its Challenge Schools program.

Maryland has consolidated these initiatives in a new Office of Comprehensive Planning and School Support. In addition to administering programs such as Challenge Schools, the office helps schools choose school designs. That can mean everything from spreading information to assessing educators' commitment to a particular model.

In addition, NAS and the state department have had a unique arrangement to fund jointly a staff member in the state superintendent's office to oversee the partnership.

"I'm a broker of information. Whatever the districts need in terms of knowledge or support, I try to help them," says Joan Kozlovsky, the NAS Maryland director.



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Financial Statements 1991-1999

	1991–92	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Revenue								
Contributions	$9,475,419	20,055,782	26,060,696	3,408,810	9,205,500	2,805,750	4,248,774	5,903,507
Interest Earned	132,254	200,008	222,403	497,273	837,518	537,659	250,328	229,518
Total Income	9,607,673	20,255,790	26,283,099	3,906,083	10,043,018	3,343,409	4,499,102	6,133,025
Expenses								
Jurisdiction Support/National Implementation of CSR	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1,684,338	3,114,247	1,737,744	1,681,538
Design Team Support	0	14,226,101	28,214,473	28,015,637	10,397,241	11,094,835	1,486,897	1,988,703
General & Administrative	2,297,228	3,000,504	3,582,887	3,414,047	2,489,282	2,434,367	372,396	503,283
Total Expenses	2,297,228	17,226,605	31,797,360	31,429,684	14,570,861	16,643,449	3,597,037	4,173,524
Excess of Revenue Over (Under) Expenses	7,310,445	3,029,185	(5,514,261)	(27,523,601)	(4,527,843)	(13,300,040)	902,065	1,959,501
Net Assets, Beginning of Year	0	7,310,445	10,339,630	4,825,369	24,686,134	20,158,291	6,858,251	7,760,316
Net Cumulative Effect Change in Accounting Principle							47,384,366	
Net Assets								
End of Year	7,310,445	10,339,630	4,825,369	24,686,134	20,158,291	6,858,251	7,760,316	9,719,817

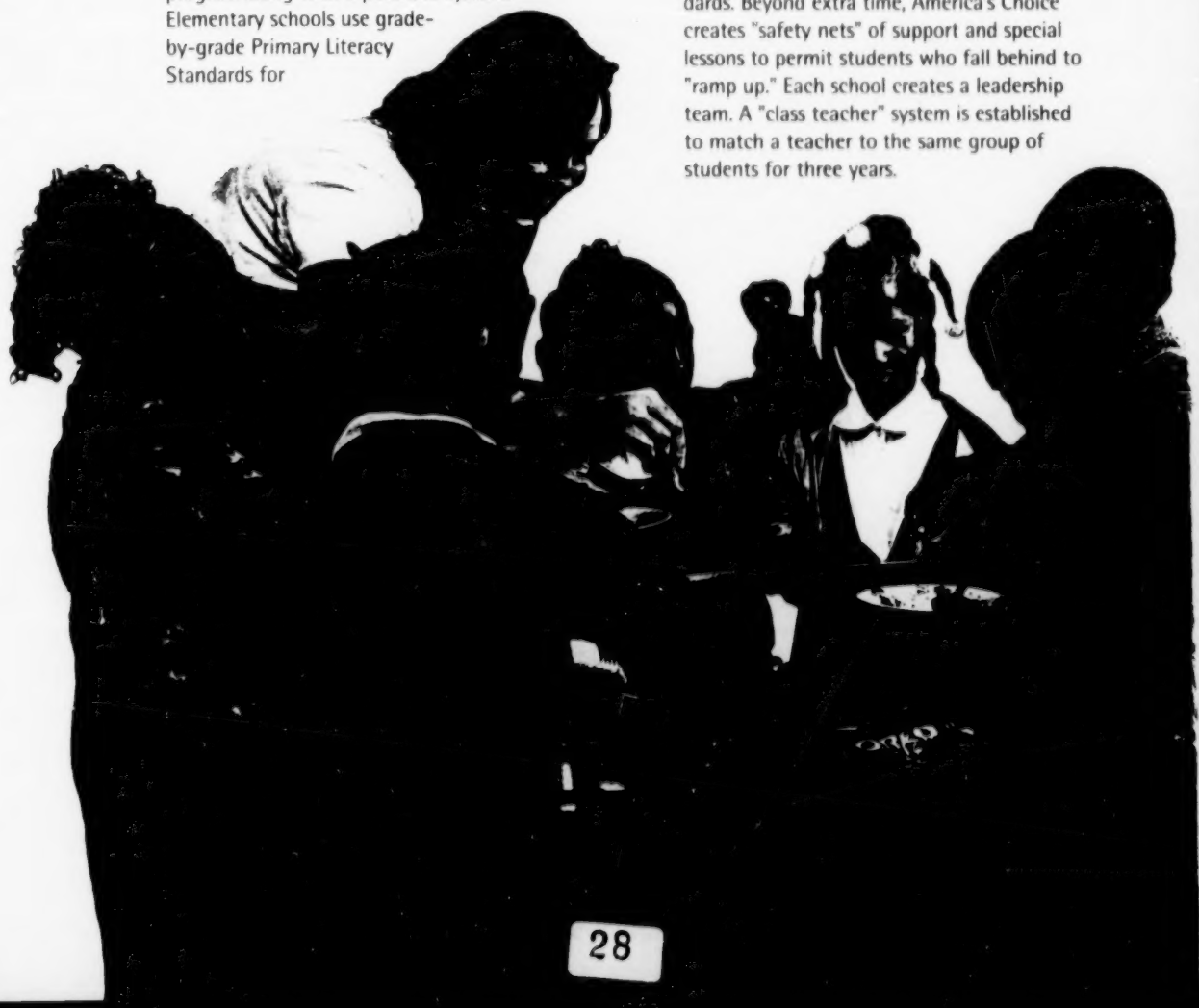
The above amounts derive from annual financial statements audited by our independent accountants, BDO Seidman, LLP and PricewaterhouseCoopers, LLP, whose reports are available upon request from New American Schools.

Design Team Snapshots

America's Choice

The America's Choice School Design was developed by the National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE). The school design evolved from NCEE's work with hundreds of schools across the country through the National Alliance for Restructuring Education. The components of America's Choice fall roughly into three areas:

- Standards & Assessments – America's Choice schools use a set of internationally benchmarked performance assessments in English language arts, math, science, and "applied learning." A state-of-the-art, performance-based Reference Exam measures students' progress along with a portfolio system. Elementary schools use grade-by-grade Primary Literacy Standards for reading and writing created by a panel of the nation's top literacy experts from both the phonics and whole language camps.
- Curriculum & Instruction – America's Choice has a set of "core assignments" that raise students to specific standards in English and math. Teachers learn to develop standards-based units of instruction of their own as well. The Primary Literacy Standards help teachers lay out a clear path of instruction that meshes reading and writing well beyond traditional practice.
- Organization & Planning – The school day, week, and year are reorganized and extended to give students enough time to reach standards. Beyond extra time, America's Choice creates "safety nets" of support and special lessons to permit students who fall behind to "ramp up." Each school creates a leadership team. A "class teacher" system is established to match a teacher to the same group of students for three years.



ATLAS Communities

ATLAS Communities was conceived as a partnership of four of the nation's most respected educational organizations: Project Zero at Harvard University, the Coalition of Essential Schools at Brown University, the School Development Program at Yale University, and Education Development Center, Inc., in Boston. By drawing on the knowledge of experts Howard Gardner, James Comer, Ted Sizer, and Janet Whitla, ATLAS Communities incorporates their best thinking into a framework of common ideas, structures, and processes that can be adapted to fit a site's strengths and needs.

Fundamental to the ATLAS Communities model is its distinctive linking of elementary, middle, and high schools in a continuous education pathway from pre-K to grade 12. Schools in the pathway work together with ATLAS staff to:

- develop coherent learning goals and content-rich, standards-based curriculum from pre-K to grade 12;
- link assessments to state and district standards that include a range of assessment approaches and instruments;
- focus the content of professional development activities on student learning (all staff participate in Whole Faculty Study Groups to increase subject area expertise and implement problem-solving strategies);
- engage family and community members in ongoing dialogue about governance, teaching, learning, and assessment; and
- use existing management structures and create new ones to support and sustain the transformation process.

ATLAS staff include a site developer to work with the pathway over the entire implementation period, a staff developer to launch and support the faculty study groups, practitioners from other ATLAS schools to assist and mentor their colleagues, consultants in key areas of the design, an evaluator to assess progress, and senior staff for overall planning and quality control.

Co-nect

The hallmark of the Co-nect design is its use of technology and project-based learning as a common thread to bring educators, students, parents, and the community together in pursuit of high academic standards. Interdisciplinary teamwork drives Co-nect.

A school design team, including the principal, a Co-nect site director, a campus facilitator, and representatives from the rest of the school, weigh research-based changes such as grouping students in small clusters and assigning teachers to those groups for at least two years. These changes help teachers to challenge the traditional education that delivers rote facts and superficial competencies – and to bridge the gap between academic knowledge and real-world applications.

Co-nect uses technology to support a framework for restructuring schools and school districts. Sensible use of technology is key. Ideally, a Co-nect school has at least one computer per classroom with Internet access and a schoolwide local area network (LAN). Co-nect teachers receive intensive professional development in critical areas such as project-based learning, assessment, and technology. They have access to the Co-nect Exchange, a Web site containing a rich collection of software tools, projects, online training sessions, and other resources. In addition, teachers may attend the annual Co-nect conference and participate in a school evaluation program, Critical Friends, through which they visit other Co-nect schools to exchange insights, critiques, and ideas.

Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound

Expeditionary Learning is a comprehensive design for grades K–12 based on 10 design principles that grow in large part from the philosophy and experience of Outward Bound. The design principles are:

- The primacy of self-discovery
- Collaboration and competition
- The having of wonderful ideas
- Diversity and inclusivity
- The responsibility for learning
- The natural world
- Intimacy and caring

- Solitude and reflection
- Success and failure
- Service and compassion

Students and teachers in Expeditionary Learning schools spend most of each day involved in learning expeditions that have intellectual, personal, and physical dimensions. Learning expeditions include fieldwork that takes students out of the school building, brings the outside world into the classroom, and engages students in real-world investigations.

Learning expeditions are usually 10–12 weeks long, taught by two or more teachers, involve some measure of adventure and service, and include a final performance or presentation to an audience beyond the classroom. Learning expeditions meet or exceed local and state standards. All students keep portfolios of their work, and assessment is ongoing.

To support learning expeditions, teachers, students, and school leaders build a culture of respect and high expectations. The school schedule is built around large flexible blocks of time. Students remain with the same teacher or team of teachers for at least two years, and teachers have at least three hours a week of common planning time to plan and critique expeditions. Each school does an annual self-review against its own improvement goals and Expeditionary Learning implementation benchmarks.

Modern Red Schoolhouse

Modern Red Schoolhouse applies the virtues and principles of its predecessor, the little red schoolhouse of yesteryear, to today's complex and diverse society. Modern Red Schoolhouse takes the expectations for achievement and community support embodied in its predecessor and infuses them with technology (for improved instructional management and communication) and new instructional strategies (that enhance understanding and retention of new concepts).

Schools selecting this design have a commitment to rigorous academic standards in the traditional disciplines – English, geography, history, math, science, the arts, foreign languages, and health and physical education. Knowing that students do not learn in the same way, or at the same time, Modern Red Schoolhouse encourages schools to monitor student accomplishments rather than "seat time." So instead of automatically moving students through 12 grades, schools track progress and provide reports in terms of what students know and are able to do.

An Individual Education Compact negotiated by the student, parents, and teacher keeps the child on track. Modern Red Schoolhouse addresses the entire restructuring of the school through development of task forces in core areas: organization and finance; technology; community involvement; curriculum, standards, and assessment; and professional development. Teachers spend an average of 12 days a year in professional development activities with the Design Team. Training focuses on the necessity of adapting curriculum, instruction, assessment, and the learning environment to improve service to students in the transition from an objective-based perspective to a standards-driven one. Teachers also receive specialized training in one of the task force areas. Later phases of implementation include focused attention on the transformation of learning environments to create opportunities for students to adopt and internalize responsible, self-directed behaviors.

Roots & Wings/ Success for All

Roots & Wings is a comprehensive restructuring of education from pre-K through age 11. Through its curriculum and a rich array of interventions, Roots & Wings strives to ensure that, no matter what it takes, every child leaves elementary school with both "roots" – the knowledge and skills needed to meet world-class standards – and "wings" – the ability to solve problems with flexibility, creativity, and confidence.

Family support is a critical component. A school support team works with teachers, family, and community agencies to address any health or home problems that might interfere with a child's achievement. The program's commitment to individual needs encompasses early intervention for preschoolers and one-to-one tutoring in reading. Curriculum is built around three areas:

- Reading Roots, which integrates phonics with reading comprehension, is drawn from the Success for All reading program, as is Reading Wings, which supplements a school's literature and basal textbooks.

- MathWings is based on standards developed by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. It features hands-on activities and an individualized learning pace.
- WorldLab integrates social studies and science in a program that combines research and writing with group exploration, role-playing, and problem-solving.

Professional development includes a three-day initial training session; several follow-up visits by Roots & Wings staff; and the services of a full-time, campus-based facilitator.

Urban Learning Centers

The Urban Learning Centers school design is based on the premise that urban communities need a reinvented American school to best serve their children. Such a school has both an ambitious educational program and an environment that nurtures students and their families.

The process of reinvention begins with a reorganization of schools into K–12 learning communities with features that include multiage classes; multiyear assignments for teachers; a thematic, interdisciplinary curriculum; and a focus on transition from school to work or post-secondary education. Teachers are trained to be effective curriculum planners and to know their students well, so they can make strong connections between what students need to learn and what they already know. Learning is measured with a combination of curriculum-embedded alternative assessments, portfolios, and standardized tests already in use.

Technology is important: Students use site-based project development centers, and every Urban Learning Center contains an information technology career academy in its high school. The design also engages the whole community in school affairs. "Learning Supports" are an important part of the program. The Elizabeth Learning Center, a national model, has a family center, a complete health clinic, an alliance with adult education providers, an emerging Head Start Center, a parent volunteer program, and parent education classes.

Turning Points

Turning Points is a national design for middle school reform coordinated by the Center for Collaborative Education in Boston. The design focuses on creating a professional, collaborative culture to improve teaching and learning for adolescents. Based on the *Turning Points* report issued by the Carnegie Corporation in 1989, plus 10 years of research and practice, this design strengthens the academic core of middle schools and establishes supportive environments that value adolescents.

A Turning Points school focuses on how to better educate young adolescents as they experience an enormous range of physical, social, and cognitive development. The challenge is to engage students in significant learning and prepare them for adult responsibilities.

Turning Points middle schools commit to a multiyear, systemic change process and engage in six practices that guide faculty collaboration and lead to significant, sustained improvement in student learning. These practices include:

- Improving learning, teaching, and assessment for all students;
- Building leadership capacity and a professional collaborative culture;
- Engaging in data-based inquiry and decision making;
- Creating a school culture to support high achievement and personal development;
- Networking with like-minded schools; and
- Developing district capacity to support school change.

Turning Points staff work closely with schools to develop a comprehensive plan of action that addresses all design components over several years. Member schools are provided with a variety of supports to help implement change plans, including: on-site coaching; professional development and networking; the Turning Points Self Study Survey, which helps schools identify challenges and set priorities; publications and technology; and accountability processes and assessment of student learning. Over time, the schools increasingly build their own capacity to carry on the work of planning, facilitating, and guiding the change process.

New American Schools Designs

As of February 2000, New American Schools (NAS) is at work in more than 2,100 schools around the country. NAS district partners commit to transforming a minimum of 30 percent of their schools within five years. Most partners are on track to meet and exceed this goal by year three. The eight NAS designs are listed below.

America's Choice School Design

Formerly known as the National Alliance for Restructuring Education, America's Choice is built on a framework of high academic standards and matched assessments. It incorporates a standards-based curriculum focused on the basics, conceptual mastery, and applications. The design quickly identifies students who fall behind and brings them back to standard, and includes a planning and management system for making the most efficient use of available resources to raise student performance.
For more information: 202-783-3668;
e-mail: schooldesign@ncee.org; www.ncee.org.

ATLAS Communities

The ATLAS design centers on pathways — groups of schools made up of high schools and the elementary and middle schools that feed into them. Teams of teachers from each pathway work together to design curriculum and assessments based on locally defined standards. The teachers in each pathway collaborate with parents and administrators to set and maintain sound management and academic policies, ultimately resulting in improved student performance.
For more information: 617-969-7100;
e-mail: Atlas@edc.org; www.edc.org/FSC/ATLAS.

Co-NECT Schools

Assisting schools in creating and managing their own high-tech equipment and network, Co-NECT uses technology to enhance every aspect of teaching, learning, professional development, and school management. Co-NECT schools are organized around small clusters of students who are taught by a cross-disciplinary team. Most students stay in the same cluster for at least two years. Teaching and learning revolve around interdisciplinary projects that promote critical skills and academic understanding, as well as integrate technology.
For more information: 617-873-5612;
e-mail: info@co-nect.com; www.co-nect.com.

Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound

Built on 10 design principles, Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound (ELOB) operates on the belief that learning is an expedition into the unknown. ELOB draws on the power of purposeful, intellectual investigations — called learning expeditions — to improve student achievement and build character. Learning expeditions are long-term, academically rigorous, interdisciplinary studies that require students to work inside and outside the classroom. In ELOB schools, students and teachers stay together for more than a year, teachers work collaboratively, and tracking is eliminated.
For more information: 617-576-1260;
e-mail: info@elob.org; www.elob.org.

Modern Red Schoolhouse Institute

This design strives to help all students achieve high standards through the construction of a standards-driven curriculum, use of traditional and performance-based assessments, establishment of effective organizational patterns and professional development programs, and implementation of effective community-involvement strategies. Students master a rigorous curriculum, develop character, and promote the principles of democratic government. These elements of the traditional red schoolhouse are combined with a high level of flexibility in organizing instruction and deploying resources, use of innovative teaching methodologies, student groupings for continuous progress, and advanced technology as a learning and instructional management tool.
For more information: 888-275-6774;
e-mail: skilgore@mrsh.org; www.mrsh.org.

Roots and Wings

This elementary school design builds on the widely used Success For All reading program and incorporates science, history, and mathematics to achieve a comprehensive academic program. The premise of the design is that schools must do whatever it takes to make sure all students succeed. To this end, Roots and Wings schools provide at-risk students with tutors, family support, and a variety of other services. While the "roots" of the design refer to mastery of basics, the "wings" represent advanced accomplishments that students achieve through interdisciplinary projects and a challenging curriculum provided by the design.
For more information: 800-548-4998;
e-mail: rslavin@inet.ed.gov; www.successforall.net.

Turning Points

This middle school design focuses on creating a professional, collaborative culture to improve teaching and learning for adolescents. Turning Points schools commit to a multiyear, systemic change process and engage in practices that guide faculty collaborations and lead to significant and sustained improvement in student learning. Member schools are provided with a variety of supports including on-site coaching; professional development and networking; the Turning Points Self Study Survey, which helps schools identify challenges and set priorities; publications and technology; and accountability processes and assessment of student learning.
For more information: 617-421-0134;
e-mail: leah_rugen@ccebos.org.

Urban Learning Centers

The Urban Learning Centers (ULC) design is a comprehensive K–12 model for urban schools. The curriculum and instruction are designed to ensure that all students are taught in a K–12 community, enabling new strategies to overcome barriers by addressing the health and well-being of students and their families. Governance and management also are restructured to engage community members in decisionmaking and to ensure that the design can improve and evolve. ULC also incorporates the extensive use of advanced technology as an essential element for implementation of the design.
For more information: 213-622-5237;
e-mail: gpruitt@laedu.lalc.k12.ca.us; www.lalc.k12.ca.us.

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